

The General Council held its ordinary session from 16 May to 11 June 2022 at Casa Generalizia in Rome.

In the course of this session the Superior General participated in the meeting of Superiors General held in Rome from 25 to 27 May. It was a beautiful experience of synodality, which allowed them to discern together what the Lord wants for consecrated life in the 21st century. At the end of the meeting, the Superiors General sent a message to Pope Francis to encourage him and assure him of their prayers.

Beyond the usual decisions and topics of animation, a large part of this General Council was dedicated to the preparation of the next Conference of Major Superiors, whose objective is to re-read the General Chapter and the chapters of the sectors, and to launch a reflection in view of the next General Chapter 2024.

These echoes bring the following information and decisions to the attention of the whole Congregation:

1. Animation of the Congregation

a. Echoes from the Provinces et Districts

* **Mexico:** After Canada and the USA, already visited at the end of last year, the Superior General completed the visit of the Province of Jean de la Mennais with that of Mexico. It took place in the company of Brother Géniaud Lauture, Provincial of Haiti and Brother Mario Houle, Provincial of North America.

The Superior General was very happy to meet the postulant and to witness the commitment of the first seven Lay Mennaisian Associates of Mexico. He thanked the Divina Providencia District for accepting to receive Postulant Ángel Gabriel for his novitiate which will begin in El Alto (Bolivia) on July 15.

The Superior General hails the good collaboration between the two Provinces of Canada and Haiti so that this mission in Mexico may develop and continue to bear fruit.

* **West Africa:** Brother Jean-Paul Peuzé went first to Ivory Coast to visit the two communities of the scholasticate in **Abidjan**. His visit began with a meeting of the major superiors directly concerned with formation in Abidjan, those of Central Africa, West Africa and Haiti. This periodic meeting is foreseen by the statutes of the scholasticate. Brother Jean-Paul continued his visit by meeting the 24 young Brothers in formation and their formators.

The Brother Assistant then flew to **Senegal**, thus completing the visit to the District of Saint Paul begun last year. In addition to visiting the three communities, the schools and the boarding sections, one of the highlights of his stay was the celebration of the perpetual vows of Brother Léopold Diouf in the Parish of Our Lady of the Annunciation of Ngascop, in the region of Diourbel.

* **Central Africa:** Brother Jean-Paul then went to **Rwanda**. This two-week visit had in two stages, essentially around formation activities. The first week, after a two-day District Council meeting in Gisenyi, was devoted to the formation of community superiors in Nyundo, run jointly with Brother Pascal Mbolingaba, Brother Visitor. It ended with the Easter celebration where traditionally all the Brothers of Rwanda meet. During the second week, with Mr. Yves Delarra, Director of FIC Expertise, France, a session was held on management and accounting: general approach, management of communities, schools and educational centres.

* **Divina Providencia:** Brother Miguel Aristondo spent 7 weeks visiting the District, composed of 7 communities, 24 Brothers in 4 countries. He was struck by the commitment of all the Brothers in the mission field, from the youngest to the oldest, Brother Benjamín, 92 years old! He underlined the involvement of the Mennaisian Family of South America in many projects for the poorest and most needy.

The District is delighted with the opening of the novitiate in El Alto, with a Mexican novice, and the presence of a young Bolivian postulant.

* **Tanzania-Kenya:** Brother Vincent Ssekate spent a month in the Province of which he is the Major Superior. This allowed him to revisit some of the communities and schools, but especially to begin to make a more accurate inventory of the properties and houses of the Province. In Moshi, Brother Vincent was able to interact with the seven 2nd year postulants and two 1st year postulants. Other postulants are still expected to join the first-year group.

b. Formation of Formators of the Brothers

After the online meetings in 2021-2022, a session for the formation of formators within our Institute is organised in **Abidjan** to take place **from 18 to 28 July 2022**. Three themes will be addressed: ***Inculturation of the consecrated life and the vows - Protection of minors and vulnerable persons - Education for personal and community prayer***. 15 formators or future formators will be present. Another session will conclude this cycle of formation, proper to the Congregation, in the summer of 2023.

c. Session of young Brothers

From **14 July to 14 August 2022**, a new session will take place in Ploërmel, for 17 young Brothers of the Congregation who are preparing for perpetual profession. Initially planned at the Lycée La Touche, it will take place at the **Mother House** - where the planned work has not yet begun.

d. Theme of the Year and updating the Rule of Life

As already announced in the last Echoes, the General Council has sent the major superiors a first animation Dossier on the theme of the Year: "**Witnessing Hope**" for the year 2022-2023.

The work of updating the Rule of Life continues. After the General Conference, a process will be proposed to the Provinces and Districts to continue to involve Brothers in the updating of the Rule of Life. In February 2023, we will begin the more direct preparation for the **General Chapter 2024**.

e. General Conference in Rome

As already announced, the Major Superiors will meet in Rome from **26 September to 1st October 2022** for the **General Conference**. This will be the first face-to-face meeting since the beginning of the pandemic.

The meeting of the International Commission of the Mennaisian Family, scheduled for October 5-7 in Rome, has been postponed. Other moments of exchange, in other ways, are planned during the year.

f. New Circular from the Superior General

The Superior General has just published a new circular "Each day" on on-going formation. He encourages all the Brothers and lay people of the Mennaisian Family to make it a real tool for on-going formation. It will be sent to the Provinces and Districts in early July.

g. Formation of the Formators for the Mennaisian Family

The preparation of the formation of Formators for the Mennaisian Family has been entrusted to the following persons: **Brother Jean-Yves Hamon (JB)**, **Brother Valmyr-Jacques Dabel (H)**, **Mr. Jean-Jacques Erceau (JB)**, **Mrs. Michèle Héту (J)** and **Brother Josu Olabarrieta (NSP)**. Several online meetings of this steering team have already taken place. It will meet in Ploërmel from 6 to 10 July 2022. These will be 5 days of intensive preparation and training which will allow us to define together the themes, the methodology and the calendar.

h. New missions

In the context of the Bicentenary, the General Council wished to open new missions in different continents. The exploratory visits were compromised by Covid 19.



However, in February 2020, Brother Gildas Prigent and Brother Stéphane Le Pape were able to visit Timor Leste (East Timor). A new visit took place in the diocese of BAUCAU last April. Unfortunately, following the death of its bishop, the diocese is awaiting the appointment of his successor.

The implantation of this new international mission can only take place after the consent of the new bishop.

In West Africa, visits have already taken place in Ghana and Burkina Faso. However, the current security situation does not allow further steps to be taken. The General Council intends to consult with the Major Superiors of Africa, in order to know how to proceed with a new implantation in Africa (requested by the Africa Conferences of 2016 and 2021).

i. Communication

During this session the General Council had a zoom meeting with Mr. Michel Tanguy, on all the subjects linked to information in the Congregation. Together they took stock of the projects in progress: the future **Annual album of La Mennais Magazine N° 48**, future issues of **La Mennais Click Infos**, the **English version of the Gabriel Deshayes Album**.

Other projects are also being studied: statuette of Jean-Marie de la Mennais and visual of Gabriel Deshayes and Jean-Marie de la Mennais, fresco representing Jean-Marie de la Mennais and the Mennaisian Family.

2. Decisions of Brother Superior General and his Council

a. Nominations

Brother Superior General with the consent of his Council, appoint:

Brother Pierrick BUSSON, Assistant Provincial of the Province of St. John the Baptist (France-England) for a mandate of 3 years.

Brother Benito ZAMPEDRI, Novice Master at the Novitiate of El Alto (Bolivia) of the District Divina Providencia (Argentina-Bolivia-Chile-Uruguay), for a mandate of 3 years.

Brother Wilfried FARA, Director of the Scholasticate of Abidjan (Ivory Coast) for a mandate of 3 years.

Brother Joseph BELLANGER, Deputy Director and Head of 3rd year Scholastics at the Abidjan Scholasticate (Ivory Coast) for a term of 3 years

Brother Eric MUGISA, Novice Master at the Novitiate of Dapaong (Togo) for a new mandate of 3 years.

Brother Jean HERBINIÈRE, Novice Master at the Novitiate of Pétion-Ville (Haiti) for a new mandate of 3 years.

Brother Dino DE CAROLIS, Postulator General of the Congregation for a new mandate of 3 years.

Brother Hervé ASSE, Archivist General of the Congregation for a mandate of 3 years. deputized by **Brother Franco GRAZIOSI**, Assistant Archivist.

b. Other decisions and appointments

1) Transfer of the Novitiate to El Alto (Bolivia)

The Superior General, with the consent of his Council, accepts the transfer of the Novitiate house from Chile to **Bolivia, in El Alto**.

2) Economic Affairs Council (E.A.C.)

The Superior General and his Council decided to set up an **Economic Affairs Council, ad experimentum until the General Chapter of 2024**, and approved its **Statutes**. This E.A.C. is an advisory body at the service of the Superior General and his Council.

Brother Claude GRÉGOIRE, Treasurer General, is the President.

The appointed members of the E.A.C. are:

Mr. Gérard ARCHAMBAULT (Canada),

Mr. Javier BERASATEGUI (Spain)

Mr. Yves DELARRA (France)

Brother Rogers KAZIBWE (Uganda)

3) Animation and government of the Province of St John Baptist

Following the appointment of a One Assistant Provincial, the Superior General allows the election of an **8th Brother as Provincial Councillor**. He also agrees to the appointment of a lay person as **Assistant Provincial in charge of Tutelle** (the educational establishments).

These two decisions are "ad experimentum" until the next Chapter of the Province.

4) Brothers of Christian Instruction of Ploërmel – Daughters of Providence of St Briec

At their last General Chapter, (May 2022), the Daughters of Providence decided to integrate the Sisters of Providence of Nebbi (Uganda) into their Congregation and wished to develop a new collaboration with the FIC.

In this sense, the General Council approved a protocol of collaboration between the two General Councils. This protocol foresees a meeting of the two General Councils at least once a year to exchange on questions concerning the formation of young religious, on-going formation, accompaniment and development of the mission and works.

We rejoice in this new page that the two Congregations will write in a Mennaisian and synodal mode.

5) Italian Delegation

Many changes have taken place, and others are still underway, for the Delegation of Italy.

In **Castel Gandolfo**, after the closure of the community in 2018 and the departure of the Walsh University students in 2020, Brother Superior General with the consent of his Council took the decision to sell the property and buildings. The process is underway and we hope to conclude the sale during this year.

In **Rome**, the Sant 'Ivo School has been facing declining enrolment, economic difficulties, and the challenge of human resources (Brothers and lay people) for a long time. We therefore, decided to close the school, transfer the community and sell the entire property.

In this month of June, after more than 90 years of service to the education of the Monteverde zone, the school has just closed. We take an opportunity to thank our Italian Brothers for all the years they have spent in this establishment, at the service of children and young people.

For our presence in Italy, a new page is opening. One hundred years ago, the Brothers arrived in Rome. From 1931, the Procurator General of the Institute and the school of Sant 'Ivo shared the same premises until 1965, when the Procurator and the students moved to Via Divina Provvidenza. Fifty years ago, in November 1972, the Generalate moved to the same address. Today, the Italian Brothers of Sant 'Ivo join the General Administration at this location. They will form a separate community and participate in various services for the Institute.

6) News from the Casa Generalizia

On 12 June 2022, the Community at Casa Generalizia had the opportunity to thank three Brothers who will be leaving Rome: **Brother Daniel Briant** for his 9 years of service to the General Treasurer's Office, **Brother Eugene Mwesigye** for his services as a receptionist and translator, and **Brother Joseph Bellanger** for his mission of accompanying the young Brothers. Good new mission to all three!

Two students, who are finishing their formation, Brother Victor, from Togo and Brother Rony, from Haiti, will also be leaving the Casa. We wish them a fruitful apostolate wherever they are sent.

It was also an opportunity to welcome the four Brothers of Sant 'Ivo who will form a new community at the Casa.

c. Admission to Perpetual Profession

Brother Superior General, with the consent of his Council, admitted to perpetual profession 3 Brothers from the District of Saint Paul (West Africa):

Brothers: **Daniel KOMBATE** and **Joseph DJAFOAK**, originally from Togo, and Brother **Quenneth YANTICOA**, originally from Benin.

Calendar of the members of the General Council

Brother Hervé ZAMOR :

- 12 – 29 July: Abidjan
- Start of August: Haiti
- Start of September: Rome
- 15 September: General Council

Brother Jean-Paul PEUZE :

- August : France
- Start of September: Rome
- 15 September: General Council

Brother Vincent SSEKATE :

- 4 July – 14 August: Session of preparation to Perpetual vows at Ploërmel
- 15 August: France
- Start of September: Rome
- 15 September : General Council

Brother Miguel ARISTONDO :

- End of June: Spain
- 12 – 29 July: Abidjan
- Start of August: Spain
- 24 August – 12 September: Philippines
- 15 September: General Council

Next meeting of the General Council in Rome: **From 15 September to 7 October 2022.**